

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5555

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 8, 2007

Title: An act relating to the GET ready for math and science scholarship program.

Brief Description: Creating the GET ready for math and science scholarship program.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Morton, Schoesler, Rasmussen, Kilmer, Delvin, Sheldon, Berkey, Jacobsen, Tom, Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/07/07, 2/8/07 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/22/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5555 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: As part of the Washington Learns effort, the committee acknowledged the need for Washington institutions of higher education to produce more graduates in high demand fields, especially mathematics and science related areas of study. A number of private business organizations have also recognized that Washington businesses import a large number of graduates from other states to fulfill the demand for graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

Summary of Bill: The GET Ready for Math and Science Scholarship Program is established to provide scholarships to students who: achieve level 4 on the mathematics or science portions of the 10th grade Washington assessment of student learning (WASL); major in a mathematics, science, or related field in college; and commit to working in mathematics, science, or a related field for at least three years in Washington following completion of their bachelor's degree. The total annual amount of each scholarship may not exceed the annual

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cost of resident undergraduate tuition fees and mandatory fees at the University of Washington. A recipient may receive a scholarship for up to 180 quarter credits, or the semester equivalent, or for up to five years, whichever comes first.

A student may be eligible if he or she: (1) is eligible for resident tuition and fees; (2) achieved level 4 on the mathematics or science portion of the 10th grade WASL; (3) has a family income at or below 125 percent of the state median family income at the time the student applies for the scholarship and for up to the two previous years; (4) has declared an intention to complete a qualified program or qualified major or has entered a qualified program or declared a qualified major; and (5) has declared an intention to work in a mathematics, science, or related field in Washington for at least three years immediately following completion of a bachelor's degree or higher degree. "Qualified program" or "qualified major" means a mathematics, science, or related degree program or major line of study offered by an institution of higher education.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction: (1) notifies students, parents, teachers, counselors, and principals about the scholarship program; (2) notifies students who achieve level 4 of the mathematics or science WASL in 10th grade that they may be eligible to apply for a GET ready for math and science scholarship; and (3) notifies the program administrator and the board, as early as possible during the fall of the students' junior year in high school, of the names and contact information of all students who achieved level 4 on the mathematics or science WASL during 10th grade.

To receive the scholarship, the student must: (1) enroll at an institution of higher education within one year of graduating from high school; (2) maintain satisfactory academic progress; (3) take at least one college-level mathematics or science course each term; and (4) enter a qualified program or qualified major no later than the end of the first term in which the student has junior level standing.

If a recipient ceases to be enrolled in an institution of higher education, withdraws, or is no longer enrolled in a qualified program, declares a major that is not a qualified major, or is no longer eligible to receive the scholarship, the student must notify the program administrator and is not eligible for further scholarship awards. The student must also repay the amount of the scholarship already awarded, with interest and an equalization fee. The recipient also incurs an obligation to repay the scholarship if he or she does not: (1) graduate with a bachelor's degree from a qualified program or in a qualified major within five years of first enrolling at an institution of higher education; and (2) work in Washington in a mathematics, science, or related occupation full time for at least 3 years following completion of a bachelor's degree, unless he or she is enrolled in a graduate degree program. If a former scholarship recipient begins but then stops working full-time in a mathematics, science, or related field within the three years, he or she repays a prorated portion of the amount of the scholarship award.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB): (1) purchases GET units for the purpose of scholarship awards; (2) distributes scholarship funds, in the form of GET units or through direct payments to institutions of higher education on behalf of eligible recipients; (3) provides annual reports regarding enrollment, contact, and graduation information of

scholarship recipients; and (4) collects repayments from former scholarship recipients who do not meet the obligations.

The program is administered by a nonprofit organization. The program administrator: (1) solicits and accepts grants and donations from private sources to match state appropriated funds; (2) develops and implements an application, selection, and notification process for awarding scholarships; (3) notifies institutions of higher education of scholarship recipients who will attend their institutions and informs them of the terms of the students' eligibility; and (4) reports to private donors on the program outcomes and facilitates contact between scholarship recipients and donors in order for donors to offer employment opportunities, internships, and career information to recipients.

The GET ready for math and science scholarship account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. The HECB deposits all money received for the scholarship program from appropriations and private sources. Expenditures from the account must be an equal match of state appropriations and private funds raised by the program administrator.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Higher Education): The definition of institutions of higher education is clarified to include private institutions. The HECB and program administrator jointly develop criteria for qualified courses, majors, and programs. The HECB is allowed to establish rules in regard to repayments, leaves of absence, deferments, and exceptions to scholarship recipient requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education): PRO: This effort will help Washington compete at the global level. We are currently not educating enough of our students for high paying jobs. It is a down-payment to bring us closer to the investments being made by the other global Challenge states. It helps us close the degree gap so that Washington businesses will be able to find and hire Washington graduates. This will help community college students afford to transfer to four year institutions.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Bob Craves, College Success Foundation; Susan Pollack, College Success Foundation; Cindy Morana, Council of Presidents; John Klacik, HECB; Loretta Seppanen, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Deb Merle, Office of Financial Management.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: It is essential for Washington to produce more math and science graduates if we are to compete effectively in the global economy. This is an innovative approach, because private funds would be raised to match state contributions to the scholarship account on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The College Success Foundation is already contacting businesses and private individuals to raise the private funds.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Deb Merle, Governor's Office; Gary Gardner, College Success Foundation.